

# Keys to Establishing and Maintaining Faculty Partnerships

## [Spotlight for Career Services Professionals](#)

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Most career services practitioners have a strong desire to work as part of the academic enterprise, not apart from it, says Rick Hearin, executive director of university career services at Rutgers University. And, for good reason.

“The more fully career services are integrated into the fabric of the institutional culture and academic life,” Hearin explains, “the greater the likelihood that students’ career aspirations and potential will be fulfilled.”

He says the first step to establishing effective partnerships with faculty is to adopt an attitude that faculty can be important allies.

“However,” he cautions, “don’t count on reciprocation from *all* faculty. No worries, though, as you need only one or two strategic relationships with faculty in each department.”

To establish faculty partnerships, he also recommends:

- Keeping your mutual focus on the student, but recognizing and respecting your faculty colleagues’ focus on their discipline, as that is the world they live in.
- Always looking for the win-win. “We” always works better than “us/them.”
- To the extent possible, embracing the faculty’s mindset. For example, when talking about the virtues of internships, understand that your faculty colleagues may be more interested in how these experiences enrich student learning than how they enhance students' employability.
- Remembering that faculty and employers live in the same world. And while *they* may not realize it, *you* do. Helping them to build bridges between each other is not only beneficial to them, but ultimately to students themselves. And it highlights the unique value you bring to the equation.

Hearin says that it’s also imperative that career center leaders find ways to maintain meaningful contact with their faculty partners.

“Fortunately, most of this comes down to good old-fashioned human relations, buttressed now perhaps through any number of social media tools at our disposal,” he says.

For example, in the book [Leadership in Career Services: Voices from the Field](#), Hearin says periodic, formal touch-base efforts can be easily supplemented with an occasional e-mail to pass along an article of interest. He offered several other suggestions for maintaining these relationships:

- Some career centers publish a periodic e-newsletter for faculty members to keep the communication lines open and to share information of broad appeal.
- A clipping from a print publication would likely be welcome from time to time.

- An occasional three-way luncheon with a key employer can be part of the career center's faculty relations strategy.
- More formal recognition ceremonies, banquets, athletic events, receptions, or other events to recognize faculty partners can also be very effective.

"The important thing is to ensure that faculty partners know that the career center appreciates and places great value on the relationships it has with its academic partners," Hearin says. "'Thank you' is easy to say, but so often overlooked. A faculty relations strategy that builds in the 'thank you' for these important allies is sure to be effective."

For more about "Leadership in Career Services: Voices from the Field," see <https://wwwcreatespace.com/3943467>.